that is evident throughout. This is a rare book that not only creates a context for arriving at a clearer understanding of the writings of an important mystic but evokes something of the mystery and beauty of his thought, especially in its depiction of the idea of the spiritual ascent as a "time of growing discernment of the soul's deepest desires" (195) and in its account of how these desires are transformed in loving communion with God.

Toward the end of the book, the author takes up the question of how this reading of John of the Cross might contribute to a fuller and less reductive reading of desire within contemporary theological discourse. Here the author seems to fall prey to an unnecessary and unhelpful reductionism of his own, citing the work of R. R. Reno to suggest that, in our current "Empire of Desire," we have come to view the highest good as "the unmediated satisfaction of unique personal desires." By contrast, he suggests, those who follow John's vision of spiritual ascent "find their own desires united with God's desire" (197). As compelling as this vision of transformed desire is, it runs the risk of simplifying, undervaluing, and caricaturing ordinary human desire, especially erotic desire. Susan Griffin's magnificent *The Eros of Everyday Life,* a book that does not figure into the author's thinking, offers a very different and more optimistic and holistic reading of ordinary desire that deserves to be represented here.

This is a relatively small misstep in what is otherwise an exemplary and beautifully realized book that succeeds admirably in realizing its fundamental aim: a retrieval of the full theological beauty and power of desire in John of the Cross's thought, understood within its historical, literary, and social context. It is a model of clarity, scholarly integrity, and depth, and offers an important reminder of the enduring significance of traditions of mystical thought for contemporary theological reflection.

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Mysticism in Early Modern England. By **Liam Peter Temple**. Studies in Modern British Religious History 38. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019. ix + 221 pp. $99.99 cloth.

This is a good book. Its scope is slightly shorter than its title suggests, covering the period from 1605 to 1705. Its subject matter has been variously defined, and, as the author notes, mysticism is "a relative and fluid term" (9). Here it is used as "a shorthand for the mystical element in religion" (10), one which derives from the Greek *mystikos*, meaning "secret" or "mysterious," and which contemporaries tended to call "mystical theology" or "mystical divinity" (10, 11). Acknowledging its roots in a tradition which conceptualized God by what he was—i.e., positive or cataphatic theology—and what he was not—i.e., negative or apophatic theology—Temple emphasizes the experiential element of early modern English mysticism: personal religious experiences that were sometimes expressed through sexual imagery derived from the Bible (particularly the Song of Solomon), sometimes as the soul's path to God through a process of purgation, illumination, and union. At other times, however, these experiences remained unarticulated because of their apparently ineffable nature. Moreover, in Temple's view, the debates under discussion here between supporters and detractors

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of mysticism need to be seen as "the final consequence of a process which had started during the medieval period: the divorce of spirituality and theology, and the separation of mystical experience and doctrinal insight into distinctly separate spheres" (16).

In a work consisting of five central chapters and prefaced by a solid introduction, Temple argues that during the period under discussion mystical experiences were generally greeted with "distrust, suspicion and derision" (1); indeed, that there was a gradual and comprehensive rejection of mysticism in England during the seventeenth century. Thus, whereas, at the beginning of the period, mysticism had largely Catholic overtones through its association with monastic orders such as the Benedictines and Carmelites, as the century progressed, polemicists collapsed the boundaries between Catholics and sectarians in order to attack Papists as much as Familists, Antinomians, and Ranters as so-called enthusiasts. Some of that onslaught on "certain spiritual and ecstatic experiences" came, as a later chapter discusses, "by converting medical theory into polemical weaponry" (77); some of it came as a by-product of the opposition between faith and reason, with the result that mysticism became positioned as anti-rational, even counter-Enlightenment (3, 139).

Chapter 1 concerns Augustine Baker (1575–1641), a prolific author deeply influenced by "illicit books" and whose "conversion coincided with a revival of the English Benedictine Congregation and a revival of mysticism in monastic circles more generally" (20). Both during his lifetime and after his death, Baker attracted followers as well as critics among whom were several figures discussed in this study—Gertrude More, Margaret Gascoigne, Barbara Constable, and Francis Hull. Even so, as Temple notes, Baker's brand of mysticism was "controversial and uncomfortable to many within the English Benedictine Congregation," doubtless because of the freedom it gave to nuns to express their intimate religious experiences (30, 43). The second chapter covers well-trodden ground: the mystical and spiritual writings of Protestants—notably Francis Rous, John Everard, Giles Randall, and the Ranters (with a particular focus on Abiezer Coppe, Joseph Salmon, and Jacob Bauthumley). There is nothing new here, but the discussion fits well within the overall framework of the book. Chapter 3 charts hostility towards mysticism from two directions in the period 1630–1670: medical theory and pre-Christian paganism. Thus, the first part focusses on Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* and Meric Casaubon's *A Treatise concerning Enthusiasme* to illustrate polemical strategies that linked melancholy with enthusiasm, thereby essentially delegitimating claims of mystical and spiritual experiences. The second part concentrates on attempts by "Protestant apologists to link Catholicism with pre-Christian paganism" (95), while a final section deals with the Cambridge Platonists and their interest in texts by mystic authors. This leads nicely to the fourth chapter on rationality and mysticism after the Restoration. Here Temple deals with the conflict between the Benedictine Serenus Cressy and the Anglican Edward Stillingfleet, in particular "the role of rationality in religion, the origins of fanaticism and the validity of tradition as a source of doctrinal authority" (109). The chapter is divided into four sections: Cressy's conversion narrative *Exomologesis* (1647; 2nd ed., 1653); his association with the Great Tew circle and the influence of William Chillingworth's writings; Cressy's experiences after the Restoration; and Stillingfleet's wide-ranging denunciations, not just of Cressy but of saints, visionaries, mystics, and monastic orders. This prompts Temple to conclude that "mysticism was thus a very effective weapon for Anglican apologists seeking to discredit Catholic claims to doctrinal authority" (137). The final chapter is on mysticism and the Philadelphian movement, 1650–1705. The key figures under discussion here are

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Jane Lead, Richard Roach, and Francis Lee, as well as continental figures such as Antoinette Bourignon and Pierre Poiret (not indexed). Here Temple argues that the Philadelphians' embrace of mysticism contributed substantially to their downfall; indeed, he argues that the Philadelphians' love of irenicism and sustained engagement with Catholic mystical texts became a tool with which their critics would attack them" (159). While nearly all the sources used in this chapter are familiar to specialists, and while a focus on mysticism precluded sustained exploration of Philadelphian apocalyptic and allied beliefs, the evidence presented here nonetheless helps sustain the book's central arguments.

Finally, although this book needed a thorough proofread prior to submission—egregious examples include "Woodhouse" for "Woodhead" (127) and "Bradford" for "Bradfield" (144), that is a minor quibble. In sum, it is an important work that is thoroughly recommended for all readers interested in the varieties of early modern religious experience.

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Catholicity and the Covenant of Works: James Ussher and the Reformed Tradition. By **Harrison Perkins**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. xv + 293 pp. $99.00 hardcover.

There is a great deal to admire about this book on James Ussher and the centrality of the covenant of works in Reformed theology in the seventeenth century. Over the past decades or so, it has become increasingly common to encounter studies of early modern English theology (often Puritan) that focus on specific doctrines in the work of individual figures, often treated in isolation. This way of proceeding, one suspects, has been overly determined by the availability of sources in English. In an exemplary manner, Harrison Perkins has demonstrated a superior and more rewarding approach to the study of seventeenth-century theology and religious history. His book on James Ussher and the covenant, drawn from a doctoral dissertation, is painstakingly researched, making extensive use of manuscript sources and of Latin and Greek. Perkins provides us with a flesh and bones Ussher, very much the churchman, politician, and theologian, placing him firmly in the torrid world of the early seventeenth century. All too frequently for historical theologians, the historical part is little more than set decoration, a little context for the main performance of theology. That is not the case here. Perkins treats Ussher in the round, asking questions of how he worked with sources, preached, influenced, was influenced, and engaged a complex and by no means consistent tradition of theological thought.

Perkins frames his treatment of Ussher around an interpretation of covenantal theology that does not simply run through the familiar figures but offers a more nuanced reading of how ideas are received and appropriated. He explicitly follows the lead of Richard Muller's arguments for diversity within the Reformed tradition with an underlying unity. Further, he acknowledges that one should not look to simple or singular lines of influence (i.e., Calvin) in determining the theological horizons of later generations. Many historians of early modern theology fall through the trapdoor of mistaking

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